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Bypass concerns Morrison businesses

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MORRISON – **Morrison** businesses are concerned about how a proposed **bypass** around the city will affect their bottom lines. State officials have been planning a **bypass** for U.S. Route 30, so traffic can avoid bottlenecks in **Morrison**. The state hasn't decided whether the road would be north or south of town.

Businesses fear they may lose customers because the **bypass** will reroute traffic. Some say signs pointing motorists to the business districts may help some.

Consultants for the state were expected to release the results of a financial impact study on **Morrison** last fall, but that has yet to happen.

Thursday, members of the city Business Advisory Group expressed their concern that they hadn't seen the results. Its chairman, Bob Vaughn, said he was disappointed the consultants hadn't stuck to the time frame.

In an email March 21, consultant Bridgett Jacquot told Vaughn that she understood his frustration. She said her firm, Volkert Inc., wants to meet with his group when it completes the study, within a few months.

"We realize that this process has been lengthy and that its results are critical to your membership," Jacquot wrote.

She said the state planned to choose the **bypass** route within the next year.

Vaughn said **Morrison** businesses would be most impacted by the project. Residents in the eastern and western parts of the county are pushing for the **bypass**, so they can avoid traffic in **Morrison**, he said.

"Of all the communities involved, **Morrison** has the most to lose in this. We have the most to gain if we take part in the process."

Bart Smith, another business group member, said the consultants had done the study but that "political stuff" was delaying its release.

In 2007, state officials began the planning for the project, which they said would expand 24 miles of U.S. 30 from two lanes to four between Fulton and Rock Falls. The plans also have included the **bypass**.

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